



**Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas**

Donald J. DeGabrielle, Jr. • United States Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, MAY 22, 2006
WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/TXS

JOHN YEMBRICK
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(713) 567-9388

**NINE CHARGED IN MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR THEFT CONSPIRACY FROM
HOUSTON CAMPUSES OF HEWLETT-PACKARD AND EXEL LOGISTICS**

HOUSTON, TX – Nine persons were indicted for conspiring to transfer in interstate commerce servers, processors, hard drives, and memory strips stolen from the Houston campus of Hewlett-Packard (HP) and the Houston facility of HP's logistical partner Exel Logistics (Exel). United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today that the nine charged are Njaidi Othman Njaidi, 35, of Houston; Franklin Lauwo, 35, formerly of Houston; Wasia Kessi Maya, 28, formerly of Houston; Abby Hussein Omari, 24, of Houston; Misso Canute Temu, 30, of Houston; Ahmed Juma Khalid, 30, of Houston; James Mtae, 27, of Houston; Frederick Omondi, 31, of Houston; and James Hill, 25, of Houston. The indictment, returned by a Houston grand jury under seal on May 16, 2006, was unsealed on Friday, May 19, 2006. Njaidi, Khalid, Mtae, Omondi, and Hill are alleged to be current or former employees of HP or Exel.

On May 18 and 19, law enforcement personnel from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Houston Police Department, and the Harris County Sheriff's Department arrested Njaidi, Maya, Omari, Khalid, Omondi, and Hill. With the exception of Hill, who has released on bond following her initial appearance in court on Friday, all others arrested have been ordered to remain in federal custody without bond pending a detention hearing scheduled for Wednesday, May 24, 2006, at 10:00 a.m. before United States Magistrate Judge Mary Milloy.

Arrest warrants remain outstanding on Lauwo, Temu, and Mtae. It is believed that Lauwo and Temu may have returned to Tanzania. Mtae is believed to be in the Houston or Dallas area. **Anyone with information concerning any of these three defendants should contact the FBI at 713-693-5000. Photos of these three fugitives are attached.**

According to allegations in the indictment, Njaidi and Lauwo recruited individuals working at HP or Exel to steal processors, hard drives, memory strips, and other items. Njaidi and Lauwo, along with Maya, Temu and Omari, allegedly paid sums ranging from \$20,000 to in excess of \$100,000 to Hill, Omondi, Mtae, Khalid and other HP or Exel employees who provided them with stolen products. It is further alleged that the next step of the scheme involved employees Omondi, Khalid, Hill, Mtae and others changing the shipping labels on outgoing shipments from HP and Exel, redirecting the shipments from customers to Njaidi, Omondi and other members of the conspiracy. Another part of the scheme involved charged employee defendants and others removing the processors from their packaging at the computer company facility, secreted the stolen goods in their shoes or clothing, and leaving the premises

with the stolen goods. According to the transactions alleged in the indictment, Njaidi, Lauwo, Maya, Omari, Temu and Khalid sold more than \$2.9 million of the stolen products to purchasers in Minnesota, California, and other states.

All nine defendants are charged with conspiring to transfer stolen products in interstate commerce, a crime that carries a punishment of up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 upon conviction. Njaidi, Lauwo, and Maya are also charged in two separate counts, and Temu with one count, of transferring stolen products in interstate commerce, a crime that carries a punishment of up to ten years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 upon conviction. The indictment also seeks a forfeiture judgment from all the defendants of approximately \$3.25 million, alleging this sum constitutes the proceeds of their alleged illegal conspiratorial conduct.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the Houston Police Department's Major Offenders Division, Cargo Theft and Fence Detail, and will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregg Costa.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

#